



U.S. Department of State
Career Transition Center

CTC NEWSLETTER

(Print Version)

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*"Bring me men to
match my mountains,
Bring me men to match
my plains,
Men with empires in
their purpose,
And new eras in their
brains.*

- Sam Walter Foss

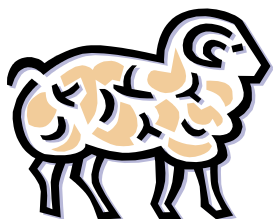
TIPS TO HELP YOU FARE WELL AT JOB FAIRS

- by Sarah E. Needleman,
published in CareerJournal.com, reprinted here with
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For many job hunters who attended a 2003 job fair in New York City, the event was just that -- fair. An estimated 3,000 visitors thronged Madison Square Garden, waiting in long lines and navigating crowded aisles to meet with recruiters, most for only a few minutes.

But the majority weren't invited to companies for follow-up interviews, causing disappointment and some hard feelings. For instance, only six of about 300 applicants were offered follow-up interviews for the positions -- mostly sales -- available at Ricoh Business Systems Inc. in Fairfield, N.J. JoAnn DeMaio, the company's corporate recruiting manager, says these candidates received invitations because they demonstrated a basic understanding of the office-products manufacturer and showed sincere interest in landing a job there. Plus, they behaved and dressed professionally and had some sales experience, she adds.

Job fairs have gotten a bad rap from job seekers, who think recruiters who attend them aren't serious about finding applicants. Moreover, they believe the odds of being selected for second interviews are poor given all the other job hunters present. The Madison Square Garden event was typical. It was so densely packed that it was tough to get interviews. The bitterly cold weather made matters worse. The outside doors to the lobby were open, and candidates who arrived early shivered in long lines for more



*"It don't take a genius
to spot a goat in a
flock of sheep."*

*- Cowboy's Guide To
Life by Unknown
Author*

than an hour before they could enter the enclosed arena.

Recruiters dispute job hunters' complaints about fairs and say that candidates who don't succeed in interesting them typically haven't prepared well enough.

"Candidates shouldn't be asking me questions," says Brendan Naughton, a sales manager with New York Life Insurance Co. in New York City. With about 30 seconds to spare for each candidate, Mr. Naughton says he wants to hear only "a quick summary of your qualifications and why I should hire you."

Getting Prepared

Mr. Naughton and other recruiters believe that well-prepared candidates who make a positive impression stand a good chance of being recommended for available openings. They offer these tips to help make your job-fair experience worth braving the crowds:

1. Research employers. Find out which employers are expected to attend and which ones you would like to see. A list of employers is generally printed on a fair's ads, brochures or Web site. Learn as much as possible about these companies ahead of time. Recruiters are more likely to grant follow-up interviews to job seekers who show they know relevant information about their company and the positions being offered.

2. Come with an open mind. In an un-

certain economy, some companies may be forced to cancel their visits at the last minute. If so, check in with any that still interest you and look for other ways to contact those that fail to show. About half the organizations that planned to attend the Madison Square Garden event didn't arrive. Those that did were mostly financial and insurance companies, with openings primarily for experienced sales and financial-services professionals.

This was fine with Sonja Bedon, who has been searching for a job as a senior financial analyst or accountant since moving to New York from Washington, D.C. in 2002. "I didn't get any interviews but was able to do some networking and look into volunteer opportunities," she says.

3. Practice your presentation. You won't make a good impression if your communication skills are rusty or weak, says Ms. DeMaio. "If someone can't present themselves well to me, how are they going to do that for our Fortune 500 clients?" she asks. Before the event, rehearse a 30-second speech that summarizes what you know about an employer and why you're qualified for an opening there, recommends Ms. DeMaio. Practice speaking clearly while you're smiling and deliver your presentation the same way.

John Milas credits his positive attitude and presentation skills for helping him land a second interview at the New York job fair. Previously a property manager with a real-estate firm in Southern California, Mr. Milas recently moved to New York. He ar-

*"Worry not that no one knows of you;
seek to be worth knowing."*

- Confucius



"Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion; you must set yourself on fire first."

- Reggie Leach, hockey player

rived late to the event, which helped since many other visitors were leaving. "I wore a smile on my face, looked the recruiters straight in the eye and gave them each a firm handshake," says the 41-year-old. "I tried to establish something we could talk about and, if possible, make the recruiters laugh a little." Representatives with Snow-Bird, a refreshment-service company in Jersey City, N.J., were so impressed that they asked him to interview at company headquarters for a sales position.

4. Dress professionally. Some candidates think they don't need to dress in office attire for job fairs. This isn't true. Recruiters expect men to wear professional apparel, such as a suit or dress slacks with a button-down shirt. Women also should don a suit but can substitute slacks for a skirt or can wear a dress and jacket.

But job hunters at Madison Square Garden were thrown a curve because they couldn't check their coats. Most wore their winter jackets over their business attire even when talking to recruiters. "Many people dress in nice suits, but you can hardly tell because they have on casual jackets," says Martin Murphy, Northeast regional sales recruiter in Parsippany, N.J., for T-Mobile USA Inc., a telecommunications company. He pointed out a man wearing a coat with a large Giants logo on the back. "When you're making an initial contact,

you want to put your best foot forward," says Mr. Murphy.

If you're in a similar situation, carry your coat on your arm or set it down nearby when meeting recruiters, he recommends. However, a better alternative would be to invest in a coat that complements the professional attire you're wearing underneath.

5. Don't assume job-fair meetings aren't formal interviews. Your candidacy may be jeopardized if you ask questions that aren't appropriate for an initial conversation with a recruiter. For instance, don't ask how much a job pays or what benefits the company offers. "That's just rude and unprofessional," says Mr. Naughton. "Use the same judgment as you would for any other type of professional interview."

6. Keep your hands dry and clean. A clammy, sweaty hand is a definite turnoff for recruiters. Be sure yours is clean and dry before shaking hands, says Tiffany Cota, a recruiter with Shore Road Financial Group, an agency of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., in New York City. Carry a handkerchief if necessary. "Nobody wants to touch a sweaty hand," says Ms. Cota.



"Whenever you are asked if you can do a job, tell 'em, 'Certainly, I can!' — and get busy and find out how to do it."

- Theodore Roosevelt

Be patient with recruiters you meet at job fairs and keep your expectations low. They typically talk to hundreds of job seekers during such events and may be able to spare you only a few minutes no matter how well qualified you are. Since you'll only meet with a few recruiters, at best, you'll remember them better than they'll recall you. "I get 60 to 70 calls from people the following week asking me if I remember them and where they stand in the interviewing process," says Kelly Rescer, field recruiter at U-Store-It, a storage company based in Cleveland. "I tell them that I'm going through piles of resumes and if I'm interested, I'll call them."



*"We got to roll with the punches,
play all of our hunches,
make the best of whatever comes your way."*

*"Forget that blind ambition,
learn to trust your intuition --
plowing straight ahead, come what may."*

-- Jimmy Buffett, *Cowboy in the Jungle* (song)

EDITOR'S NOTES



You can find many job fair announcements in The Washington Post's Sunday "Jobs" section. But Washington, D.C. is not the center of the universe, so, if you are interested in job fairs in the D.C. area and other

locations in the U.S., here are a few other sources for job fair information:

Career Fairs - www.careerfairs.com

- Good site completely devoted to job fairs. Doesn't include all job fairs everywhere, but good for general interests.
- Free access to site.
- Covers all of U.S. and Canada.
- You can search by month, category, and state.

Intelligence Careers - www.intelligencereers.com/careerfairs/

- Free access to site
- Most "events" listed on this site are "Defense Systems & Intelligence Careers" job fairs. The event announcements include lists of confirmed participants (the companies).
- This site also lists some intelligence "industry" jobs and offers a connection to ThinkingJobs.com which has another job board.
- Very DC-centric, but does include some fairs in other areas of the U.S.

Expo Experts - www.newspaperjobfairs.com

- Free access to site
- Lists newspaper-sponsored job fairs and only those newspapers that subscribe to their service, but they do include various from the U.S. and Canada. You can search by 3 very general professional categories and the events are listed chronologically.

Other Sites

- accessjobs.org – www.accessjobs.org/careerfair.html
- Baltimore Sun - www.baltimoresun.com/services/newspaper/events/
- Corporate Gray – www.corporategray.com

com or www.fedjobs.com/chat/jobfairs

- Diversity Job Fairs – www.DiversityJobFairs.com or www.naacpcareerfair.com/Nevent
- Employment Guide – www.EmploymentGuide.com/browse_jobfairs.html
- Hire Quest Job Fairs – <http://hirequest.com>
- IT Career Events – www.it-careernet.com
- Jobexpo.com – www.jobexpo.com
- Nonprofit Career Network – www.nonprofitcareer.com
- Tech Expo - www.techexpousa.com
- Transition Assistance Online - www.taonline.com/careerpages/careerfairs.asp
- Washington Post - www.washingtonpost.com/careerfairs



"Eagles don't flock — you have to find them one at a time."

- Ross Perot

JOB LEADS



Here are some job fairs in the DC area that we have heard about. There are more, so let us know when you hear about ones of in-

terest. We are happy to broadcast them to our distribution list.

Note of caution: be sure to check the website BEFORE you go to the job fair! You want to make sure that it is a fair that will interest you. The companies attended are usually listed on the site so that you can do research on them in advance. And - most importantly - the site and time may have changed or the event cancelled!

ThinkingJobs Career Fair

August 19, 2004

To be held at ThinkingJobs.com Career Center in Herndon, VA

For more info: www.intelligencecareers.com

CTC Job Fair

August 24, 2004 (1 to 4 pm)

To be held at FSI in Arlington, VA

For more info: www.state.gov

Employment Guide Career Fair 2004

September 22, 2004

To be held at Baltimore Convention Center in Linthicum, MD

For more info: www.employmentguide.com

Intelligence Careers Fair

September 23, 2004

To be held at BWI Embassy Suites in Linthicum, MD

For more info: www.intelligencecareers.com

Corporate Gray Job Fair

September 24, 2004

To be held in Washington, DC metro area

For more info: www.corporategray.com

Central Maryland Career Fair

September 24, 2004

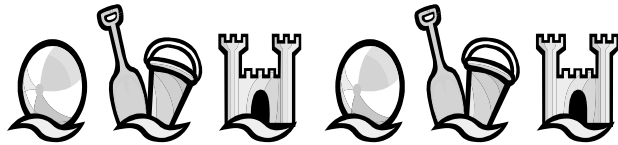
To be held at Bowie Baysox Stadium in

Bowie, MD
For more info: 301-805-6000

Baltimore Sun Bi-Annual Career Fair
October 12, 2004
To be held at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, MD
For more info: www.baltimoresun.com/services/newspaper/events/

Shomex Diversity Career Fair
October 19, 2004
To be held in Washington, D.C.
For more info: www.naacpcareerfair.com/Nevent

Corporate Gray Job Fair
October 22, 2004
To be held in Greenbelt, MD
For more info: www.corporategray.com



ATTENTION JSP GRADS!



There will be 3 JSP Follow-up Meetings In August and September. Join us to discuss your job search progress and share information!

The Follow-up Meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. in Room E-2118 at the Shultz Center on these dates:

- August 31
- September 14
- September 28

"Stand up. Look 'em in the eye, and tell 'em what you know."

- Dan Rather, quoting his mother's advice



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*U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.
20522-4201*

*Editor: Amy Pitts
Telephone: 703-302-7412
Facsimile: 703-302-7416
E-mail: pittsa@state.gov*